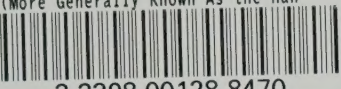


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A REPORT PERTAINING TO THE

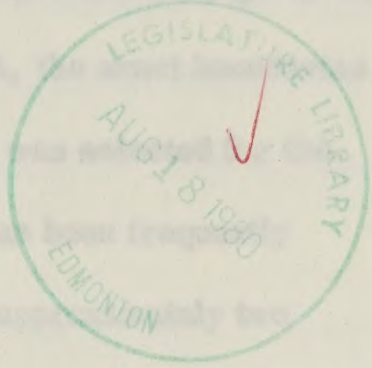
BERRY CREEK AREA

- 23

BEING GENERALLY KNOWN AS THE RAPHA DISTRICT

REPORT

BERRY CREEK AREA



O.S. LONGMAN,
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
FIELD CROPS COMMISSIONER,
EDMONTON, ALBERTA.

April 20th, 1932.

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Town | Youngstown. |
| Village | Richdale.
Chiboucou. |
| Station | Wainwright.
Hartfield.
Wainwright.
Wainwright.
Wainwright. |

A REPORT PERTAINING TO THE

BERRY CREEK AREA

(MORE GENERALLY KNOWN AS THE HANNA DISTRICT)

The territory under review consists of certain lands North of the Red Deer river and East of Range 18 and West of Range 6, West of the 4th Meridian, and South of Township 34, the exact boundaries of such are hereinafter specified. This area was selected for the reason that it includes the poorer soils and has been frequently subject to drought. It is from this area that approximately two hundred and fifty settlers were moved during the summer of 1931 by assistance of the Provincial Government. Municipal boundaries have been followed as closely as possible in order to facilitate adjustment with these units.

The area includes seventy-two full townships and seventeen fractional townships of land comprising a total area of approximately 2,054,240 acres. The greatest distance from the extreme North to South, is seventy-six miles and from the Western to Eastern limit, sixty-six miles.

There are two lines of railway operating through the area. namely: The Calgary-Saskatoon and the Hanna-Steveville lines of the Canadian National Railway. The former passing through the Northerly portion of the area in Northwesterly or Southeasterly direction while the latter extends in a southerly direction through the central portion of the area.

Within the area the following towns, villages and hamlets have been established on the forementioned lines of railway.

Towns: Youngstown.

Villages: Richdale.
Chinook.

Hamlets: Stanmore.
Scotfield.
Rose Lynn.
Sunnynook.
Carolside.
Pollockville.

SETTLEMENT

The early settlers in the district were ranchers. It is reported that during this period that grazing was exceptionally good and ranches were established mainly adjacent to the rivers.

The area under review was made available for homesteading about 1908-09, with the result that homesteads were eagerly sought and practically all available lands were settled within a few years. The influx of settlers naturally curtailed the range and seriously affected the ranching business.

The years prior to 1915 were not particularly favorable, with the result that many of the new settlers became discouraged and left their holdings. However, the bounteous crops of 1915-1916 along with war prices greatly improved the financial condition of the farmers for the time being. Railway facilities were provided, community development and improvements were undertaken with the hope that a permanent community life might be established. During the past ten years, however, conditions have not been generally satisfactory, many farmers have become discouraged, abandoned their farms and as a result the area has been greatly depopulated.

The chief cause of the unfortunate condition referred to, is the lack of sufficient rainfall to produce profitable grain and fodder crops. During the past three years of almost continuous draught, accompanied with unprecedented low prices for farm products, many farmers have been forced to discontinue farming or seek land in more favorable area. This condition prevails at the moment and many settlers residing within the area are anxious to move elsewhere but have not the financial resources to procure transportation and acquire a new location.

As a result of crop failures and the general economic depression, not only have the farmers suffered financial embarrassment but Municipal districts are confronted with serious financial problems.

Arrears of taxes are accumulating at an alarming rate, and they are carrying on with very limited financial resources. Schools have been closed due to depopulation or lack of funds, while others still operating have not sufficient number of pupils attending to justify their operation. It is quite probable that a considerable number of schools will not be able to operate beyond midsummer.

In addition to the general financial embarrassment of the farmers, Municipalities and School district, there is a heavy indebtedness owing Banks, Mortgage Companies, Loan Companies, Merchants, etc. The extent of these obligations and encumbrances has not been ascertained, unquestionably the total would involve several million of dollars.

A PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

The plan for improving the condition of the farmers within the area which appears to receive the greatest support, is that of re-organizing the farming methods in the area from grain growing basis to combination farm-ranch basis. The general plan being that the present farm holding be increased by making available to remaining farmers, leases at low rates if rental. In other words, in addition to the farmers home place, which in most cases he has title to or holds under Agreement of Sale, he would acquire sufficient leased land to make up a unit of from four to nine sections of land. The area acquired depending upon the availability of land, soil conditions and the ability of the settler to advantageously use such lands.

To bring about an adjustment of farm operations as previously indicated, a reduction in population in certain areas would be desirable, farm unit of from four to nine sections would permit nine to four units per township. At present the number of resident farmers per township varies from 14 to 26 per township, while the average for the Municipal Districts comprising the area is approximately 22 resident farmers per township, as indicated by the Municipal Secretary-Treasurer's reports for the year 1931.

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From the foregoing it will be observed that if the suggested plan is to be successfully put into operation, a reduction in population in certain districts is desirable. To this end it would appear advisable that the present policy of free transportation be continued.

In order to facilitate the organization and establishment of the farm-ranch unit, it would appear desirable, if not essential, that all possible land within this area be brought under single control.

To this end it would appear advisable that in so far as it is possible, that land now alienated from the Crown, revert to the Crown either by tax recovery or exchange. Considerable adjustment can be accomplished by exchange of lands within the area, but if certain lands within the area could be exchanged for lands outside the area, undoubtedly more rapid adjustment of lands could be accomplished.

DISORGANIZATION OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS

In view of the present and possible further reduction of population within the area and the lessening of demand for public improvements and facilities and the further demand on the part of residents for general reduction of taxation, also the desirability of having all lands within the area under single control, it would appear desirable and advantageous that all Municipal Districts or portions of such districts within the area be deorganized and operated on the basis of local improvement districts. In order to bring about an adequate and rapid adjustment of the affairs of the area it is essential that a single duly constituted authority have power to deal with all major problems common to the area. This suggestion is not intended to infer that any Municipal or other district within the area should be forced to accept the suggested scheme. It would appear advisable and logical that the scheme be undertaken in those districts where the residents are in sympathy and desirous in coming under the supervision as hereinafter referred to.

WATER SUPPLY

It should also be mentioned that in order to make the farm-ranch unit operative, it is essential that adequate water supply for livestock be available. It is quite generally agreed that two to two and one half miles is the maximum distance cattle will effectively range from a supply of water. To this end it is highly important that the development of adequate supply to water should be an important part of the farm-ranch unit program within the area. The construction of dams on creeks and coulees, the drilling of wells, the protection and development of wells already drilled and also the development of springs would undoubtedly be part of such a program.

DEVELOPMENT OF FARM-RANCH UNIT

In the development to the farm-ranch unit, the fact that a large percentage of the land has been cultivated must be taken under consideration, as such, its grazing value is practically nil. It is generally believed that such land will return to grass within a few years time. The rapidity of this transformation will largely depend upon seasonal conditions, particularly rainfall prevailing during future years, also the extent to which farmers will have capital and means for seeding to grass such suitable lands as are in their possession.

In order that the farm-ranch unit method of operating may prove attractive to the resident farmer, such lease land must be available at a rental charge in keeping with their productive powers taxes must be reduced to minimum as well as all other overhead charges.

Reorganizing of the present type of farming or the establishment of a new form will not in itself insure success. With whatever reorganization which may take place, there must go hand in hand better cultural methods, improvement of livestock, the proper management of grazing areas, most of which must be evolutionary rather than revolutionary in its development.

An intensive survey of the possible water resources of the area should be undertaken during the coming summer. Water is obtainable by means of wells over a greater part of the area. Unfortunately in certain districts this supply is found in quicksand. The sand tends to fill the wells and thus interferes with the supply also operation of pumping equipment.

In view of the importance of an adequate supply of water in the improvement of conditions within the area, it would appear advisable that special investigations be conducted with a view to develop underground water supplies. The matter of finding ways and means of controlling quicksands is a subject which might be referred to the Department of Agriculture Engineering, University of Alberta, Edmonton, for its attention and recommendations.

The location of small dams in creeks and coulees for the impounding of water is most desirable. These structures must be properly located, substantially constructed, and preferably erected by private or community enterprise. Already a number of dam sights have been located by the Alberta Water Resources Branch on various creeks and coulees. It is necessary, however, that this work be carried still further if an adequate supply of water is to be provided. As already intimated it is very desirable that the survey with reference to water supply be fairly well completed before making major adjustments within the area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While it is obvious that any plan which may be suggested will not apply with equal force to all parts of the area, it is desirable that a general plan be adopted for the reorganization of the area. With a view to suggesting a general plan, I submit the following recommendations.

(1)

That the area within the following named boundaries,

commencing at a point on the Red Deer River on range line between ranges seventeen and eighteen then continuing North to the township line between 28 and 29, following said township line East to range line between ranges 14 and 15, following said range line North to township line between townships 30 and 31, following said township line East to range line between ranges 12 and 13, following said range line North to township line between township 33 and 34, following said township line East to range line between townships 31 and 32, following the said township line East to range line between ranges 6 and 7, following South said range line to the Red Deer River, thence following the Red Deer River in a North-westerly direction to the range line between ranges 17 and 18, including all of Municipal Districts number 273, 274, 243, 244, 245, 214, 215, the four eastern townships of M.D. 275; the six Southern townships of M.D. 304; all of local improvement district 213 and that portion of Local Improvement District 246 East of township 18, be declared a closed area and that no further lands be alienated from the Crown.

(2) That the above described area be known as the Berry Creek Area.

(3) That such legislative authority be secured as to enable the properly constituted authorities to make compromise settlements of arrears of taxes, seed grain and relief liens, and any other Crown claims now levied against the lands, or to cancel in their entirety any such Crown claims if deemed advisable.

(4) That an Administrator or Board be appointed to administer the lands within the area, assisted by an advisory committee selected from land owners and lease holders residing within the area. That in the event of a Board being appointed to administer the area that members of such a Board be competent to deal with (a) Agricultural, (b) Taxation and (c) Financial problems common to the area.

(a) That one member for the advisory committee be

selected from each Municipal District on such area as designated by administrator or Board.

(b) That members of advisory committee shall serve without remuneration, except for personal expenses incurred, when attending meetings called by Administrator or Board.

(5) That an Administrator or Board be given sufficient authority to meet all requirements and to include the following:

(a) To make general regulations for the administration of said lands, such regulations to become effective upon approval by Order in Council.

(b) To define lease areas, fix terms of leases, having regard for the purpose for which such lands might be utilized, and to provide that such rental be an inclusive one to cover all taxes and charges which may be levied against such lands.

(c) To adjust and vary leases already granted, if possible, when it is considered generally advantageous to make such adjustment.

(d) To decide upon the amount of debenture liability, if any, now outstanding which shall be carried as a specific charge against any school district, and to negotiate with debenture holders so as to arrive at an adjustment of all debenture liability now payable by village and rural districts.

(e) To arrange for the removal of settlers to new locations within or outside the area.

(f) To lease lands to the present residents of the area, such residents to be given the first refusal of reasonable acreage now occupied by them, or which is adjacent to their present holdings.

(g) To set aside any area for community grazing if deemed advisable.

(h) To segregate any section within the area from the

general provisions relating to the closed area.

(i) To deal with all questions of policy relating to such lands.

(j) To arrange for the exchange of lands with any person or corporation whether any such lands be within the area or not. Such exchange to be made on a valuation basis, exclusive of encumbrances.

(6) That first consideration in the allotment of lands be given to the present residents who desire to remain within the area, and can make satisfactory use of such land.

(7) That every possible assistance be given to residents in adjusting their liabilities.

(8) That proceedings be taken against all lands in arrears for taxes whether occupied or abandoned so as to secure title thereto in the name of the Crown and that the Administrator or Board be consulted in fixing the terms of redemption and upset price for said lands.

(9) That arrangements be made in cases where proceedings are taken by taxing authorities under The Tax Recovery Act, whereby the procuring of title to any parcel of land to the taxing authority will have the effect of disposing of all liens which may be registered against such lands so that taxing authority may secure clear title thereto.

(10) That the existing rural municipalities be disorganized as soon as possible and that control be exercised them securing the lands in arrears for taxes in such districts.

(11) That the basis of valuation of land for assessment purposes be revised so that assessment will be reduced to approximately valuation, having regard to the use such lands may be put.

(12) That the school districts not in operation be disorganized and that the remaining districts be reorganized to meet the actual needs of the area.

(13) That arrangement be made for the opening or closing of road allowances where deemed advisable.

(14) That the necessary provisions be made for the conserving and the development of water supply where deemed advisable throughout the area.

(15) That any application for leases now pending or subject to renewal, be passed upon by the Administrator or Board and that temporary lease only be granted pending the consolidating of parcels to be used for lease purpose.

(16) That any leases, grants and any agreements entered into with residents of the area be non-assignable except with the approval and consent of the Administrator or Board.

(17) That four tonine sections of land be considered as an area suitable for a farm-ranch unit.

(18) That in order to promote permanency of tenure, residents be encouraged and assisted in securing title to home places.

(19) That the present population in the area in question be reduced and that free freight on settlers effects be granted to all those who wish to move from the area and where residents avail themselves of this privilege, that they surrender title to the Province of Alberta of all land in their possession within the area.

(20) That notice be issued, that no seed, grain, feed, or direct relief will be provided by the Province to any former resident of the area who has moved from the area at Government expense and who may return to the area at a future date.

(21) That the school inspectors officiating within the area be given additional authority whereby they may adjust the school facilities to the rapidly changing educational requirement of the area.

(22) That the immediate adjustment within the area be confined to the Municipal Districts of Flowerdale, Lonebutte, Bulyea and Berry Creek.

(23) Inasmuch as the area in question is subject to drought that special attention be given to ways and means of preserving or storing

of feed and seed in years of ample supply to meet the requirements of poorer years.

(24) That effective means be undertaken to control the taking up of land by new settlers and the bringing under cultivation of new lands.

(25) That, in conjunction with the general reorganization of the area, there be provided such agricultural assistance and direction as will aid the residents of the area in carrying out the proposed program.

Respectfully submitted,

O. S. Longman
O.S. LONGMAN

April 20th, 1932.

APPENDIX

The following information relating to the Berry Creek area is appended hereto:

1. Record of crop yields and annual precipitation as provided by the Dominion Department of Agriculture Illustration Stations within the area.
2. Uncollected taxes in rural municipal districts.
3. Liabilities of rural municipal districts.
4. Report on seed and grain relief indebtedness in rural municipal districts.
5. Disposition of lands in municipal districts.
6. Municipal acreage and population.
7. Soldiers' Settlement lands.
 - A. Land controlled by Soldiers' Settlement Department.
 - B. Land patented in the name of Soldiers' Settlement Department.
 - C. Land unpatented, of which Soldiers' Settlement Department hold claim.
8. Statement pertaining to Dominion Government claims for seed grain, fodder, and relief, on lands within the area.
9.
 - A. Maps re proposed dam sites as located by Alberta Water Resources Branch.
 - B. Boundaries of area, and local improvement units included within area.
 - C. Soil map pertaining to a portion of the area.
10. Bulletins re providing of farm water supply.
11. Disposition of lands within the Berry Creek area.
12. Disposition of Government lease lands within the Berry Creek area.
13. Information pertaining to school districts within the Berry Creek area.

GOVERNMENT ILLUSTRATION STATIONS LOCATED WITHIN THE PERRY CREEK AREA.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CESSFORD</u>			<u>SUNNYNOOK</u>			<u>YOUNGSTOWN</u>		
	<u>Wheat on : Fallow Bus.</u>	<u>Wheat 2nd : crop. Bus.</u>	<u>Precipit- ation. Ins.</u>	<u>Wheat on : Fallow Bus.</u>	<u>Wheat 2nd : crop. Bus.</u>	<u>Precipit- ation. Ins.</u>	<u>Wheat on : Fallow Bus.</u>	<u>Wheat 2nd : crop. Bus.</u>	<u>Precipit- ation. Ins.</u>
1920							18.00	10.00	
1921							15.00	10.00	
1922							6.00		
1923							25.75	26.50	15.00
1924							7.00	(Failure)	12.29
1925				12.00	(Failure)	13.68	20.25	21.25	13.58
1926				12.00	7.20	12.48	21.00	12.00	13.07
1927	34.80	22.50	23.14				22.50	17.00	21.07
1928	44.00	21.00	14.84	23.00		11.15	17.75	13.00	11.00
1929	9.60	7.80	8.28	8.00	(Failure)	8.20	6.00	4.00	8.42
1930	7.00	5.00	10.74	Halted Out		8.44	Halted Out		11.96
1931	1.10	(Failure)	6.28	(Failure)		4.02	5.50	4.00	6.84
TOTAL	96.50	56.30	63.28	55.00	7.20	58.17	164.75	117.55	113.23
AVERAGE	19.30	11.26	12.65	9.16	1.44	9.69	13.73	10.70	12.53

RURAL MUNICIPALITIESUNCOLLECTED TAXES

As At December 31st, 1931

Name of District	Number of District	Municipal Taxes	Supp. Rev. Taxes	Educational	Wild Lands	Municipal Hospital	Hall Insurance	Total
Sounding Creek	273	33167.63	12623.59	1484.58	1314.70		6922.43	55512.93
Flowerdale	244	56805.87	17685.87	3763.10	16711.59	1753.50	5518.99	102238.92
Lonebutte	245	37293.70	13850.90	5276.97	3849.52	14485.70	9580.02	84336.81
Bulyea.	215	39362.90	17854.61	5673.39	2254.09		3101.80	68246.79
Hand Hills	275	74875.05	17641.94	2197.99	6215.41	20830.09	14553.03	136313.51
Richdale	274	36568.55	12392.86	2636.81	9205.27	6273.53	10178.79	77255.81
Collhome	243	32143.77	11543.05	2508.43	2458.71	1437.36	11532.06	61623.38
Hiram	304	24755.26	10433.82	2117.85	1979.93	3222.85	10471.35	52981.06
Berry Creek	214	39203.39	60466.17	13540.65	13619.55			116829.76
TOTALS		374176.12	164492.81	39199.77	57608.77	48003.03	71858.47	755338.97

RURAL MUNICIPALITIES

LIABILITIES AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1931

Dist- rict No.	O/S cheques	Accts. Pay- able	Loans	Sundry	Supp. Rev.	Educ.	Wild Lands	Hospital	Hall	School	Seed Grain & Relief	Total
273	465.38	160.00	1178.90	2826.66	13228.82	1553.75	1314.70		7051.10	46938.68	22.58	74740.57
244	160.54	1105.96	1489.70	659.19	17992.64	3773.36	16756.79	1753.50	5736.19	55293.07	106224.03	210944.97
245	5327.09	3643.91	2830.51	1219.13	13850.90	5276.97	3849.52	14485.70	9580.02	47748.28	72177.08	179989.11
215	981.99	3544.13	3574.45	3418.06	21124.01	7820.61	2469.32		4241.57	56391.76	78392.52	181958.42
275	2089.91	5056.84	36187.81	1547.10	17641.94	2197.99	6215.41	20830.09	4837.58	84376.43	18853.43	199834.53
274	366.60	444.08		400.00	12802.20	2637.17	9914.16	6273.53	585.48	46914.86	16844.38	97242.46
243	4732.13		970.98	436.92	11548.57	2508.43	2458.71		10383.03	53034.28	34846.40	120919.45
304	419.12	187.82	3867.59		10933.80	2247.59	2288.93	3222.85	10839.77	36020.09	100.19	70177.75
214	473.01	771435	1655.00	6645.30	51348.29	13723.49	13856.37			111717.62	67116.69	274255.12
15015.77	21857.09	51754.94	17152.36	170521.17	41804.36	59123.91	46565.67	53254.74	538435.07	394577.30	1410062.38	

LOCAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

UNCOLLECTED TAXES

District No.	Imp. Dist. Taxes	Supp. Rev. Taxes	Wild Lands	Hospital	Costs
213	8926.00	3014.49	629.30		206.98
246	5582.40	2091.62	335.86		215.98
Total	14508.40	5105.11	965.16		422.96

NOTE : Above figures apply to all lands in L.I.D. 246

SEED GRAIN AND RELIEF

District		Government		Owing by		Owing by Farmers
		Gaurantee	District	District		
Sounding Creek	# 273	9407.40	3363.22			22.58
Flowerdale	# 244	106690.36	106079.23			
Lonebutte	# 245	72952.40	72177.08			52381.09
Bulyea	# 215	78392.52	78392.52			
Hand Hills	# 275	18853.43	18853.43			17802.80
Richdale	# 274	14693.89				14693.89
Collhome	# 243	41747.56	34946.40			
Hiram	# 304	100.19				100.19
Berry Creek	# 214	67194.77	67116.63			62180.97
		410232.52	380828.57			146581.52

District and Number		Current Liabilities	Fixed Assets	Uncollected Taxes (Including sch.)	Total School Taxes
Sounding Creek	# 273	4630.94	3722.00	101640.08	46127.15
Flowerdale	# 244	3415.39	3755.00	156717.12	54478.20
Lonebutte	# 245	7821.59	9000.00	132085.09	47748.28
Bulyea	# 215	11518.63	3038.75	123707.69	55460.90
Hand Hills	# 275	44881.66	6561.00	220689.94	84376.43
Richdale	# 274	1210.68	6266.00	123974.06	46718.25
Collholme	# 243	6140.03	5209.00	114657.66	53084.28
Hiram	# 304	4474.53	4640.00	89001.15	36020.09
Berry Creek	# 214	16487.66	2661.66	168620.17	51790.41
		100581.11	44873.01	1231092.96	475753.99

DISPOSITION OF LAND IN MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS

WITHIN BERRY CREEK AREA (ACRES)

Municipal Name	District No.	Government Lands	Vacant School Lands	Leased Grazing Lands	Municipal Lands	S.S.B. Lands	Corporation Lands	Privately Owned Lands	Lands Subject to Tax Recovery	Arrear of Taxes
Hiram	304	10,018	19,718	11,159	769	2,931	30,513	84,097	38,896	89,977.91
Lone Butte	245	12,637	10,240	8,640	12,158	4,484	30,930	127,636	21,930	132,085.09
Flowerdale	244	26,560	9,920	6,240	21,120	4,960	42,840	110,380	30,880	156,985.41
Sounding Creek	273	14,720	10,349	5,503	8,060	2,875	38,430	129,975	44,443	149,276.01
Collhome	243	27,655	7,845	4,237	6,380		35,660	138,945	27,680	32,143.77
Richdale	274		9,280	4,732	6,357	5,915	57,010	116,992	6,164	119,354.51
Berry Creek	214	11,520	12,800	34,912	17,600	960	36,000	92,208	88,000	159,519.64
Bulyea	215	8,000	9,600	24,250	24,000	1,600	17,080	32,770	51,200	61,087.78
L.I.D.	213	21,280	11,840	71,388		3,195	29,860	68,323	8,000	29,264.52
TOTAL		132,399	102,092	171,061	96,444	26,980	319,323	901,626	317,193	929,694.64

NOTE : The above figures are only approximately correct. Figures for parts of Hand Hills M.D. 246 within the area not obtained.

MUNICIPAL ASSESSMENT ACREAGES AND POPULATION

District	Other Lands	Lease Lands	Number of Residents	Estimated Population
Sounding Creek	#273 177849.21		210	950
Flowerdale	#244 179860.00	6880.	150	626
Lonebutte	#245 175043.44	12796.	132	300
Bulyea	#215 133721.00	33850.	100	375
Hand Hills	#275 173657.67	6044.5	350	1400
Richdale	#274 183285.3	4732.	255	860
Collinsdale	#243 180985.58	4237.	200	1000
Hiram	#304 188657.89	24951.	270	925
Berry Creek	#214 47712.00		120	900
L.I.D.	#213		80	
L.I.D.	#246		60	
TOTALS	1410772.09	93390.50	1927	7335

